

# **Housing for All – Cohousing in Community**

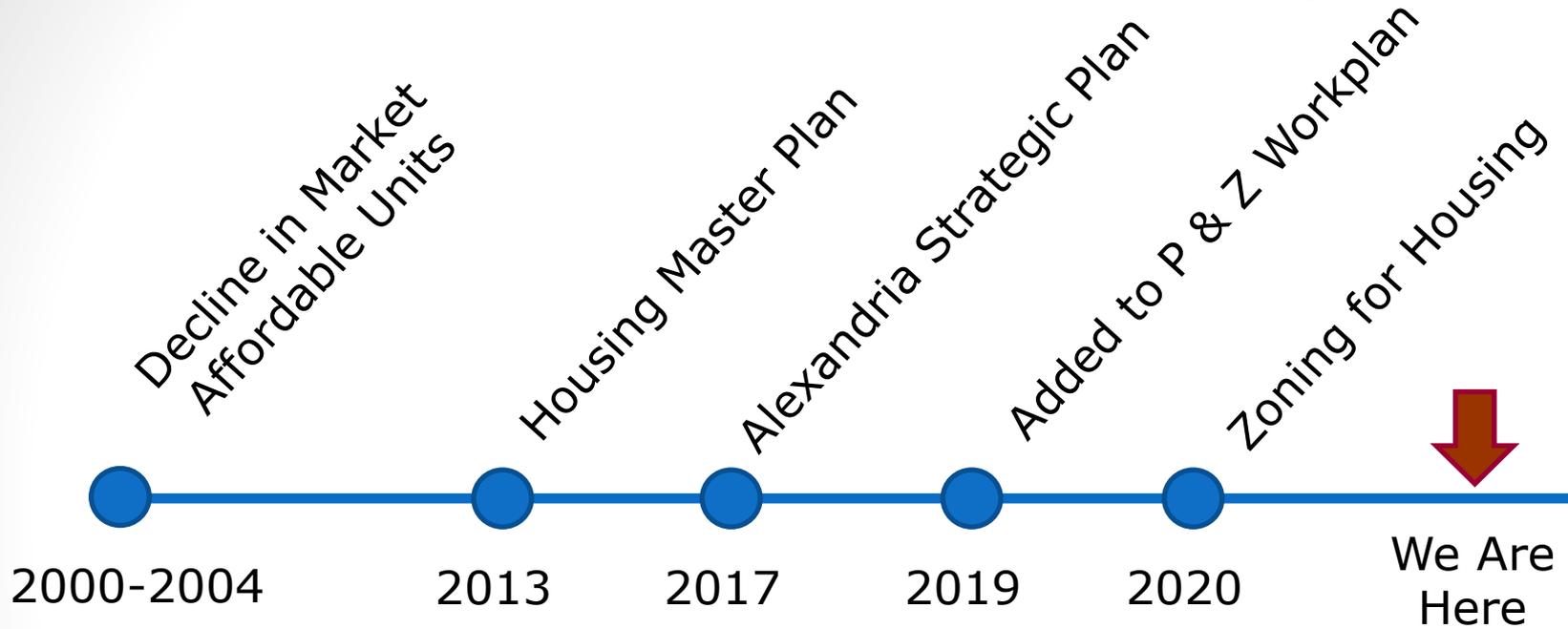
DRAFT March 22, 2021  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
Virtual Public Meeting I

# What is Cohousing?

- Cohousing generally offers tenants a private bedroom/bathroom as well as access to communal areas like kitchen and living spaces. Suites do not include separate cooking facilities.



# Why Research Cohousing?



All Incomes



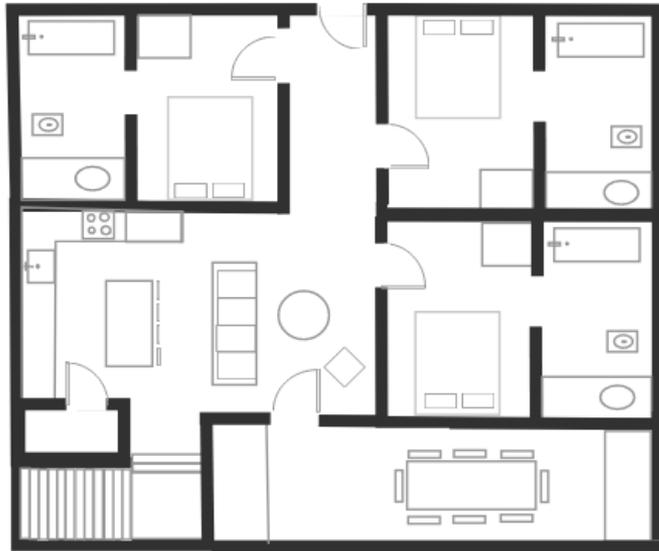
All Ages



Diversity



# A Look Inside Cohousing

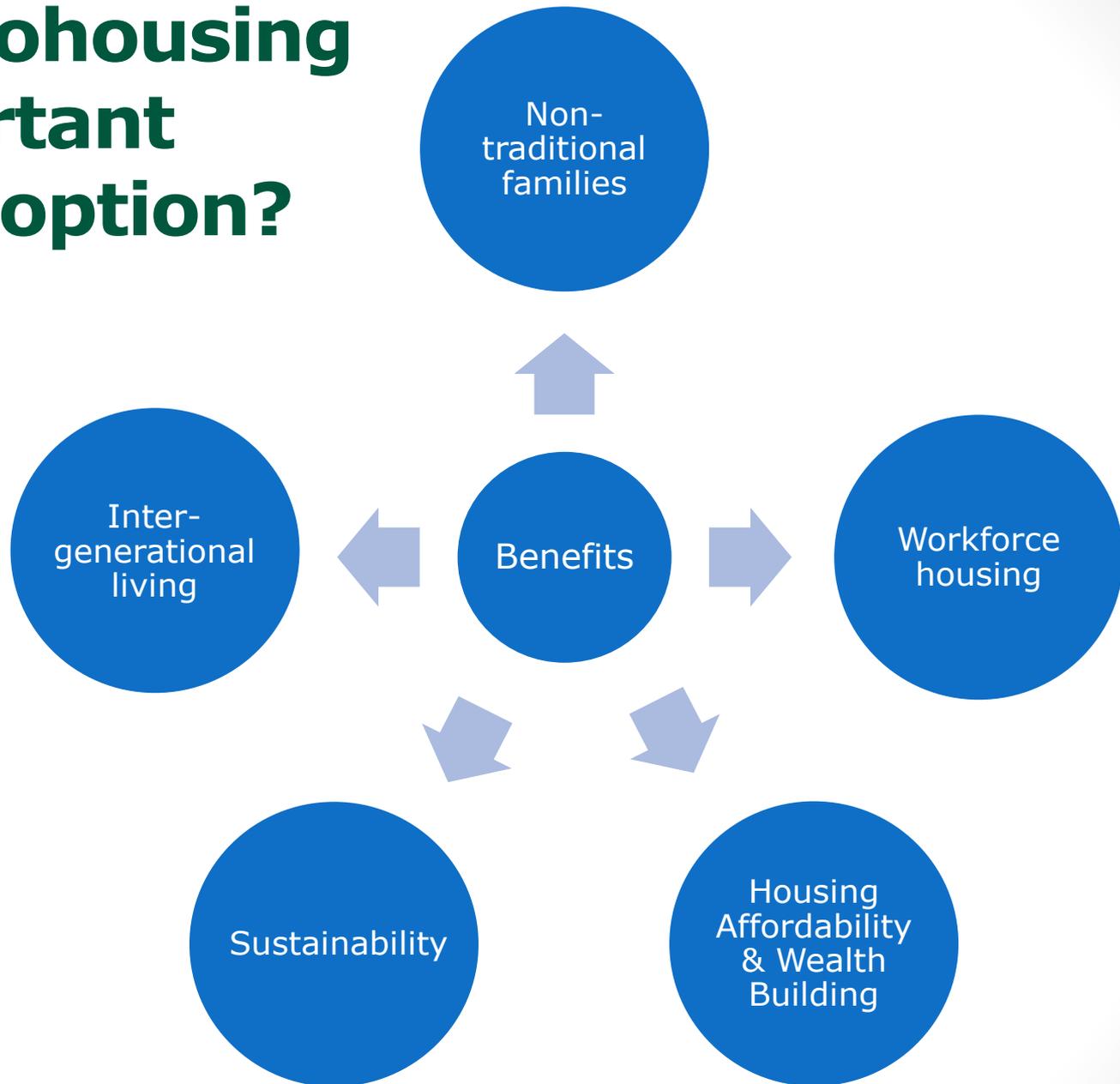


There are two main differences between cohousing and other residential uses...

- 1) Cohousing can accommodate more unrelated adults
- 2) Cohousing offers shared spaces instead of providing these spaces in each individual unit



# Why is cohousing an important housing option?



# Cohousing Umbrella



Group Living\*

Single room occupancy (SRO)

Rooming and boarding house

Lodging house

**NOT to include "Congregate housing facility"**

\*Certain types of VA certified group living facilities may be included

# Similarities & Differences

Characteristics (as used or by definition)	Rooming Houses	Apartment Hotels	Congregate Housing Facilities
Shared common areas	●	●	●
24/7 Security cameras		●	●
On-site management	●		●
Cap on the number of adults who can live there	●		
Specialized Residential Care			●
Can accommodate individuals and families		●	

# Existing Cohousing in Alexandria



1001A Queen St./300 N. Patrick

- In operation more than 40yrs
- 8 People; 1 Staff
- Located above ground floor retail
- Zone: CL/Commercial Low

1002 Pendleton/521 North Henry St.

- In operation more than 100yrs
- 8 People; 1 Staff
- No tenants own cars
- Zone: CSL/Commercial Service Low





# Definitions

Roominghouse:

A dwelling or portion thereof which contains guest rooms designed or intended to be used, let out of or hired for occupancy by, or which are occupied by **three or more, but not exceeding nine individuals** for compensation and in which meals may be provided. Existence of one or more of the following characteristics constitutes prima facie evidence that a dwelling is being used as a roominghouse: separate rental agreements for different roomers; separate entrances from the exterior for individual roomers; and typical common areas of a dwelling, such as the living room and dining room, being utilized as sleeping areas or not being available on an equal or common basis to all roomers. For regulations applicable to roominghouses, see Sections [7-1900](#) and 12-221.



# Definitions (continued)

Family:

- **Any number of related people & 2 unrelated tenants**
- **Up to four unrelated people** are permitted in a dwelling or **two unrelated people plus their children**
- Groups identified in Code of Virginia, [§ 15.2-2291\(A\)](#)\*
- Any other housekeeping unit not specified above may apply for a **full hearing special use permit not to exceed nine persons\***.

# Definitions (continued)

Congregate housing facility:

A structure other than a single-family dwelling where unrelated persons reside under supervision or 24 hour on-site management and may receive special care, treatment or training, on a temporary or permanent basis.

**“Congregate housing facility” is a defined separate use from the cohousing proposal and NOT within the scope of this project.**

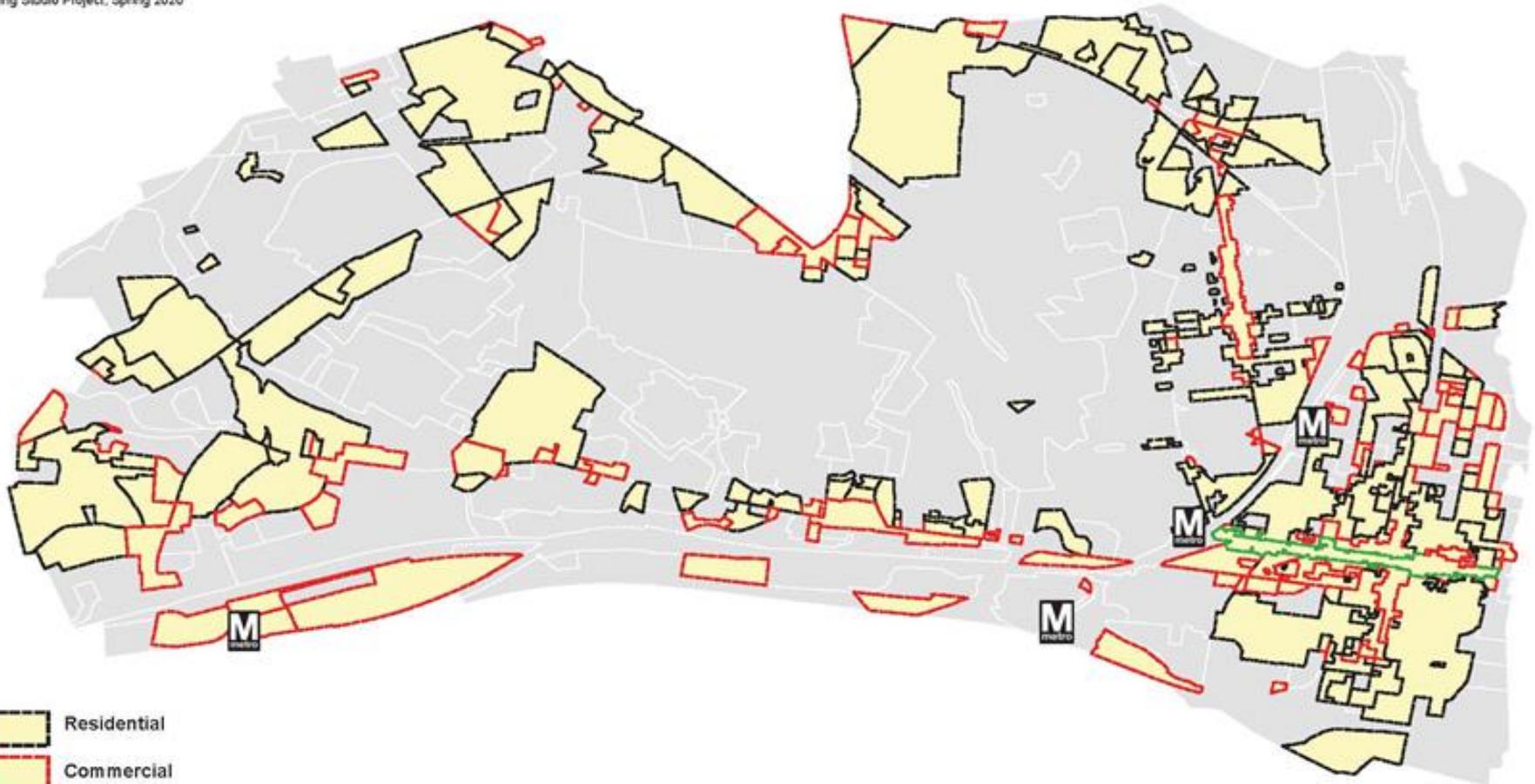


# Where are these uses currently allowed?

Zone	Apartment Hotel	Rooming House	Congregate Housing Facility
<b>Residential Zoning</b>			
Sec. 3-603 - RA/Multifamily zone. Special use.		●	
Sec. 3-703 - RB/Townhouse zone. Special use.		●	
Sec. 3-803 - RCX/Medium density apartment zone. Special use.	●	●	
Sec. 3-903 - RC/High density apartment zone. Special use.	●	●	
Sec. 3-1002 - RD/High density apartment zone. Special use.	●	●	
Sec. 3-1103 - RM/Townhouse zone. Special use.		●	
Sec. 3-1203 - RS/Townhouse zone. Special use.		●	
Sec. 3-1303 - RT/Townhouse zone. Special use.		●	
All other single-family and two-family zones			
<b>Commercial Zoning</b>			
Sec. 4-103 - CL/Commercial low zone. Special use.		●	●
Sec. 4-203 - CC/Commercial community zone. Special use.		●	●
Sec. 4-303 - CSL/Commercial service low zone. Special use.		●	●
Sec. 4-403 - CG/Commercial general zone. Special use.	●	●	●
*Sec. 4-503 - CD/Commercial downtown zone. Special use.	●	●	●
*Sec. 4-603 - CD-X/Commercial downtown zone (Old Town North). Special use.	●	●	●
*Sec. 4-803 - OC/Office commercial zone. Special use.	●	●	●
*Sec. 4-903 - OCM (50)/Office commercial medium (50) zone. Special use.	●	●	●
Sec. 4-1003 - OCM (100)/Office commercial medium (100) zone. Special use.	●	●	●
*Sec. 4-1103 - OCH/Office commercial high zone. Special use.	●	●	●
Sec. 4-1404 - NR/Neighborhood Retail Zone (Arlandria). Special use.			●
<b>Mixed Use Zoning</b>			
Sec. 5-103 - CRMU-L/Commercial residential mixed use (low). Special use.	●		●
Sec. 5-203 - CRMU-M/Commercial residential mixed use (medium). Special use.	●		●
Sec. 5-303 - CRMU-H/Commercial residential mixed use (high). Special use.	●		●
Sec. 5-403 - CRMU-X/Commercial residential mixed use (Old Town North) zone. Special use.	●		●
<b>Special Overlay Zoning</b>			
Sec. 6-702 - KR/King Street urban retail zone. Upper floor special use.	●	●	●

*\*Requirement to have someone living on site in a rooming house may be waived on a case by case basis*

## Zoning Districts for Rooming Houses\* Permitted in the City of Alexandria



-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Special Overlay

\*Rooming Houses are permitted as special uses in all zones indicated on the map. Special uses require a Special Use Permit (SUP), which are issued for certain uses of property in the City. If approved, the permit may require that special conditions be imposed to assure the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding area. Applications for special use permit approval are considered by the Planning Commission and City Council (City of Alexandria, DP2). Source: City of Alexandria GIS Zoning Map. <https://cityofalexandria-alexgis.opendata.arcgis.com/search?q=zoning>

0 0.5 1 2 Miles





# Common Considerations for SUP Approval

- Number of people living on the property
- Proximity to transit
- Parking requirement
- Proximity to recreational facilities or providing on-site open space or payment in lieu
- Facility maintenance management or owner occupancy
- Length of rental agreement (Leases of 30 Days or more)
- Dedicated affordable units or payment in lieu
- Presence of signs or advertising
- Consistency with adopted plans
- Mitigation of potential nuisances (ie. refuse collection, landscape buffering/screening)

# Possible Proposal Format

## By-right:

- List of zones (TBD)
- Max. of X or fewer people

## Admin. SUP:

- List of zones (TBD)
- Max. of  $>X$  but  $<Y$  people
- Owner-occupied or tenant identified as facility manager
- Other community concerns addressed... (TBD)

## Full Hearing SUP:

- List of zones (TBD)
- Greater than Y people
- Other community concerns addressed... (TBD)

# Project Timeline



# Questions to Consider

- Defining Cohousing
- Which zones are appropriate:
  - By-right
  - By Admin SUP
  - By full-hearing SUP
- What are the potential impacts?
- What conditions should be requirements of a SUP?

# Community Engagement

Please provide feedback via the online survey (closes April 5) found on the project website.

Link:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/planning/info/default.aspx?id=120969>

This information will be used in the development of the cohousing policy recommendations.

# Available Resources

- Project website on P&Z page
  - Video Presentations
  - VT Co-living Case Study Report
  - Up-to-date Project Timeline
  - Feedback surveys
- Press Releases/E-news Messages
- Request form for a presentation to your organization



Comments, Questions, Suggestions?

Contact: Alexa Powell, Urban Planner  
[alexa.powell@alexandriava.gov](mailto:alexa.powell@alexandriava.gov)

Save the Date:  
Cohousing Open House  
April 20, 2021